

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Ernest Steiner, 78, stockbroker

"My hobby was fishing and, likewise, the hobby of my friends, many of them, was and is fishing. So, I felt that Waikiki was not the same. I couldn't fish there or anything else. I just figured Waikiki was not the place for me now. And with all, with so many people there and everything around there and the place was overfished, there was no fishing then, so my life was all centered at Waimānalo."

Ernest Steiner's parents, originally from Czechoslovakia, came to Hawai'i via the Mainland United States during the 1880s. It was then that James Steiner married Rosa Swartz and began to raise a family of four boys and one girl. Their fourth child, Ernest, was born on April 15, 1908.

Steiner spent most of his early life in Waikiki, where he was known to be an excellent fisherman and canoe steersman.

He attended Punahou School but graduated from high school in Los Gatos, California. After receiving his degree from the University of Washington in 1931, he took up a position with Standard Finance Company and later joined the army during World War II.

While in the army, Steiner was stationed at Waimānalo with a crash boat unit. He returned to Waimānalo after the war and has lived there ever since.

He is married to the former Elsa Peters and is still active in the business community as a stockbroker.

Tape No. 13-7-1-85 and 13-8-1-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Ernest Steiner (ES)

March 5, 1985

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Michael Mauricio (MM) and Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MM: This is an interview with Ernest Steiner on March 5, 1985 at his office in Honolulu. Interviewers are Michael Mauricio and Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, here we go. Now Mr. Steiner, could you tell us a little bit about your parents?

ES: The information I have is this, that my father came down here in either 1882 or the year of 1885 and he worked for a restaurant up on Hotel Street just on the 'Ewa side of the old YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association]. The owner of that restaurant was a Lionel Hart and the restaurant was known as Hart's Restaurant. It was in this restaurant that my father worked as a waiter and later on he was taken in by Mr. Lionel Hart as a partner. There was one of my brothers named Lionel after this said Lionel Hart. At a later time, the family established a home close to that restaurant.

MM: Your family?

ES: Yes, and it was there on Adams Lane, a lane which now separates the old YMCA from this new building which is on the corner of Hotel and Bishop Street, a piece of land acquired by my father some years after he arrived here, from a Hawaiian family by the name of Auld, A-U-L-D. I am sure there are many Aulds still in the Hawaiian Islands.

MM: Did your father come to Hawai'i expressly to work?

ES: No. My father, as I was informed, first worked as a bellhop or a waiter someplace in Missouri, someplace in St. Louis, Missouri. Then he met a man that spoke German, like himself, and this man whose name I do not recall since it was not given to me, suggested that he, my father, come out to Hawai'i and find a place for himself. That's how he got here.

MM: Was he married [before he arrived in Hawai'i]?

ES: No. He was not married by then, but shortly after that, oh, say within five or six years, he got married [in Hawai'i]. Likewise, my mother came from the same place as my father, I think, which is a place known as Czechoslovakia.

MM: Would you know about when they came to the United States?

ES: No, I cannot tell you but it was probably in about, oh, somewhere around 1880, right around 1880 or shortly thereafter [1882-1885].

MM: They lived in town [when they first arrived in the islands]?

ES: Yes. My oldest brother, Harry Steiner, Judge Harry Steiner, was born in that area there, bounded by Bishop Street, Hotel Street and Adams Lane.

MM: When did they first move to Waikīkī then?

ES: I would say that they moved to Waikīkī in about 1899. The area there where they moved was on Kalākaua Avenue, just on the 'Ewa side of what is now known as Kūhiō Beach. There is still one landmark there. It is not an exact landmark, but there is a banyan tree that overhangs that sidewalk on Kalākaua Avenue on the ma kai side. That was within, less than a 100 feet that my father established a home.

MM: He built that house?

ES: (The house was built by a Mr. Wilhelm.) All I know as I remember, it was a very, very old frame building, a residence, one story.

MM: Was your father still working for Lionel Hart at the time?

ES: No, I don't think so. . . . Lionel Hart expired shortly after that. My father ran the business. Whether he bought Lionel Hart out, I do not know, but my feeling is that he bought this Lionel Hart out and continued with the restaurant business. And it was there, on that corner or that area there bounded by Adams Lane, Bishop Street, and Hotel Street that ice cream was made here commercially. He was the first one that sold ice cream here commercially. I emphasize the word, "commercially," because we did have ice cream, but it was not dispensed with commercially.

MM: Thirty-one different flavors, huh.

ES: Pardon me?

MM: Thirty-one different flavors?

ES: (Chuckles) Well, I don't know. Ice cream today is so much better.

MM: Did he try any other businesses?

- ES: He decided to give up the restaurant business and then he established another business right in that area there and it was known as the Island Curio Company.
- MM: What did they make?
- ES: They sold everything Hawaiian, everything. Not necessarily musical instruments, but calabashes, stamp collections.
- MM: Stamp collections?
- ES: Yes, my father was a great stamp collector. In fact, some people in Honolulu today have his stamps. My nephew [Keith Steiner] for one, who is an attorney here, has stamps which were collected by my father and placed on cards and sold to tourists.
- MK: What types of people made up the clientele of your father's curio business?
- ES: Well---you did have tourists that came up here and I think that there were very, very few curio businesses in the islands and that Island Curio was one of them. Later on, as a kid, I remember there was one on Bishop Street conducted by a man by the name of Effinger, E-F-F-I-N-G-E-R.
- MM: Did your mom do any work?
- ES: No, not that I remember, she did not.
- MK: Mr. Steiner, you mentioned the name Effinger. I've heard of a store called the South Seas Curio Shop that was located in Waikiki. Would that be the same shop that was run by a Mr. Effinger?
- ES: [John Effinger operated the South Seas Curio Shop in Waikiki.] I remember Effinger as a man about five feet, four inches tall and about four feet wide. I can remember that.
- MM: Okay. You mentioned two brothers already Harry and Lionel . . .
- ES: Yes---the oldest member of the family was Harry, he graduated from Punahou [School] and then he went to Yale Law School etcetera, he went to Yale University. Then the other brother, oh, about four years younger, Lionel, named after Lionel Hart, worked for the Honolulu Iron Works. I can remember that. Then the third boy in the family was Walter that worked for [Theo.] H. Davies and Company. He died about twelve years ago. Then there was a sister by the name of Helen, I do not remember her. She died, oh---as I say, I do not even remember when she died.
- MM: Before you were born?
- ES: No, I was already able to walk around Waikiki, but still I don't remember my sister.

MK: For the record, what were your parents' names?

ES: My father's name was James Steiner and my mother's name was---her maiden [name]---I'm thinking in German it's called S-W-A-R-T-Z, but her first name was Rosa, R-O-S-A.

MM: Swartz. Okay, let's go on to your childhood now. You remember when you were born?

ES: April 5, we're getting pretty close, 1908.

MM: (Chuckles) Okay. You were born in Waikīkī, were you the only one in your family that was born there?

ES: My other brother, some years older than myself, Walter, was born in Waikīkī. The two oldest members of the family, I'm really sure were born up on Bishop and Hotel Street, Adams Lane.

MM: You said you were born in an older house on Waikīkī and . . .

ES: Yes, let me see, let me see---the street number of that house was 2411 Kalākaua Avenue so this place today would be 2405 Kalākaua Avenue. That would be the approximate street number of that place. If you will recall there was Uluniu Avenue running off of Kalākaua Avenue . . .

MM: Right.

ES: Well, if you galloped right across and followed Uluniu Avenue straight down to the ocean, that was about where the first house was located, directly ma kai of, I would say, Uluniu Avenue.

MM: That was close to the banyan tree [on Kūhiō Beach] then?

ES: Yeah, close to the banyan tree. I don't think there were any, there was very few other people in the area. There was one prominent Hawaiian family there that lived, oh, within eighty or ninety feet from our place. That was the William Kananui family. Mr. Kananui was a surveyor and engineer working for the Territory. He had a son named Bill that was a graduate of the [U.S.] Naval Academy. He was brought up in that area too.

MM: Was that a big family?

ES: No, incidentally, I think Bill Kananui died about eight years ago.

(Telephone rings. Interview interrupted, then resumes.)

ES: Incidentally, this Kananui family is rather famous. This Bill Kananui, a graduate of Punahou [School] and a graduate of [the U.S.] Naval Academy has a son that is number two in command of the great airplane carrier, the USS Enterprise. Is the Enterprise an airplane carrier, do you know?

MM: Uh huh [yes].

ES: Well, he's the number two man on the Enterprise, but his father was brought up right there [at Waikiki] too.

MM: Okay, from that first house that you lived in . . .

ES: Yeah, on the Diamond Head side [of the Steiner house], I'd say [the Kanakanui house was] about ninety or a hundred feet.

MM: And, whatever became of that house?

ES: That [Kanakanui] house was moved across Kalākaua Avenue and was used as a rooming house by a man named Gibson. Mr. Gibson was a sergeant, an ex-sergeant in the Army. He ran a, you might call it a third-grade apartment house. (Chuckles) His rooms and everything were very much in demand during the war [World War II]. So that place was moved over there and they conducted a business there. Then I think that finally the place was destroyed in order to make room for a hotel, the Biltmore Hotel. All of that was destroyed.

MK: You mentioned that the house was moved over there during the war . . .

ES: Or just prior to the war.

MK: Which war? One or Two?

ES: Where I lived at Waikiki, the frame house was moved across the street.

MM: During World War I?

ES: No, World War II.

MM: Your family owned a lot of property right in that area.

ES: They owned property---today, where the Hyatt Regency [Hotel] is, but before that time, we did have property on the beach right across the street from the Hyatt Regency [Hotel]. I think that I can show---in that picture there, there probably was frontage on the beach, at that time, oh roughly, about 250 feet frontage on the beach, but it was in that area there on the beach, that my father built a new home about 1912.

MM: Would you know who he acquired the property from?

ES: That property was bought---my father told me, I think it was bought from the Territory. It was sold at public auction. I know that he bought it through an auction. That I remember definitely. I believe it was Territorial property then. Then, after that, there was another piece of property that was put up for sale which was next to us that was the Waikiki Tavern property. It may have been called Heine's Tavern. It was owned by the Elks Club. Likewise, that property [the Waikiki Tavern, or Heine's Tavern property] was sold

at public auction, too, and my father was able to buy it with the help of the, I might say, the Bishop Bank here.

MM: Did he acquire those properties all about the same time?

ES: Ah, no, the property where we lived, in that two-story house (pause) was purchased first. Some years later, maybe twelve years later [1924] this property Heine's Tavern or the Waikiki Tavern was put up for sale by the Elks Club. It consisted of a whole bunch of old-fashioned buildings.

MK: Why did your father acquire that second property?

ES: He just liked Waikiki property. There was a business being conducted on that property. There was a bathhouse business. And as I remember it, there was a man conducting that business. We called him, "Nishi." He was an old-fashioned, very loyal Japanese fellow. A good friend of my father's, he lived there and he ran the place. The bathhouse business had lockers, surfboards, showers, and bathing suits. A great deal of that traffic to Waikiki in those days, as I remember it, was either by streetcar or by walking. It was at that time, as I remember, an automobile would amble up and down that coral road which is Kalakaua Avenue, oh, you'd see an automobile once every ten minutes.

MM: Oh yeah? (Chuckles)

ES: Yes, and I can even remember the automobiles that did gallop up and down that street. One in particular was owned by the Brown boys, there was a Francis Brown, a famous golfer here that many of us know. He was, as I remember, one of the few. I don't think at that time there was more than twenty automobiles or twenty-five automobiles owned by people that lived in the Kalakaua, Diamond Head area. I don't think there was more than twenty-five or thirty automobiles.

MM: Were there a lot of bridges?

ES: Bridges? On Kalakaua Avenue? There was a bridge on Kalakaua Avenue separating the residential property of Waikiki from the Kapi'olani Park; there was a bridge and there was a lagoon that ran up there. They called it Makee Island. I don't know if it was named after that sea captain. There was a [James] Makee sea captain, they called it Makee Road and Makee Island. There was a bridge that ran under Kalakaua Avenue there. That was one. Kalakaua Avenue crossed another bridge, oh maybe, a hundred and fifty yards on the 'Ewa side. (Pause) Both of them had water or streams that entered into the ocean. The other bridge was located about, oh, maybe a hundred and fifty feet away from 'Ohua Avenue--there was an 'Ohua Avenue ran up ma uka.

MM: So you've seen quite a bit of things in Waikiki---during your life there.

ES: Pardon me? Yes.

MK: Could I interject a follow-up question . . .

ES: What's that?

MK: You mentioned a bathhouse being run by the Japanese, "Nishi."

ES: Yes, we called him, "Nishi."

MK: I'm unfamiliar with bathhouses so can you tell us how a bathhouse used to run.

ES: Well, all I know, they had lockers in the place. They had showers, and you rented a bathing suit or you rented a surfboard.

MK: How much did it cost, say to rent an item?

ES: I think to rent an item at the most at that time was fifty cents. I think surfboard was twenty-five cents, to rent a surfboard. These were not, I'd say fabulous, surfboards that you have now. You might call them "glorified planks."

(Laughter)

MK: And earlier you mentioned a Heine's Tavern or Waikiki Tavern.

ES: Yeah, I think it was first Heine's Tavern, then later on it became known as the Waikiki Tavern.

MK: After your father acquired the property that the Waikiki Tavern sat on, what happened to that particular tavern business?

ES: That tavern business continued for quite a while until, say 1928 or 1927 when it was leased out to a man by the name of Villiers and his partner, a Robert J. McLean. They took the property over and improved it, tearing down the old buildings and putting up other buildings which were still wood but was much more modern. They were the ones that conducted that business until they were hard hit by the depression which started, I guess, in around 1930 and 1931.

MM: What kind of changes did you see in Waikiki as you were growing up?

ES: The great changes came directly at the end of the war.

MM: Which war is this now?

ES: World War II. Then great changes came. There were other changes prior to that time, and it was a property on the ma uka side of Kalākaua Avenue owned by a Prince Kūhiō. [He] was our delegate [to Congress]. He owned a terrific amount of property on Kalākaua Avenue. Almost all the way from--Ka'iulani Avenue to running ma uka, it wasn't on that corner but, oh say about 200 feet, he owned all that property say about a hundred and fifty feet from Ka'iulani Avenue on up to almost 'Ōhūa Lane. He had a great, great deal of property there.

This Kalaniana'ole or Prince [Jonah Kūhiō], they called him, "Prince Cupid," too, he must have owned 900 feet or 1,000 feet on Kalākaua Avenue. Easily 1,000 feet or more. It ran back and it must have run back easily 400 feet. I'd say roughly that this "Prince Cupid" or Prince Kalaniana'ole owned a piece of property, say 1,000 feet long on Kalākaua Avenue to a depth of about 500 feet. He owned that whole area. He had his home there, back there he had one home there. Later on this was sold into lots, all that property where the Hyatt Regency [Hotel] is, and there are a number of other places all along there, where you see the high rises on Uluniu Avenue all the way [to], almost---you know there is a Catholic church, up there, St. Augustine, that is the Catholic church. He [Prine Kūhiō] owned most of the property up to the Catholic church, but not all of it. I think there is a Queen Emma Estate or Lili'uokalani Estate that owned some. With that exception of that property on Kalākaua Avenue, this Kalaniana'ole, "Prince Cupid," owned it.

MM: Was there a lot of ah, since he was Hawaiian, royal activities?

ES: He was Hawaiian. Lot of activities. As I remember, quite often, they'd have lavish lū'aus, yes they would. This Prince [Kūhiō], after selling some property or selling most of it across the street, acquired some property along the beach. I can't tell you how long he owned that property on the beach. He may have owned the property since the beginning of time. I think in that picture [ES points to picture in room] there is a pier there---you see a second pier in that picture? He had a home on the beach. He put up a new home where that second pier is, not the first one. I'm talking about the pier closer to Diamond Head, that's where he had a second home.

MM: You're talking about what time period is this now?

ES: You mean what year it was? Ah, say 1923, about 1923.

MM: This is about the time when they started dredging the Ala Wai Canal. [The Ala Wai Canal was begun in 1921 and completed in 1928.]

ES: About the Ala Wai Canal that was done by Mr. [Benjamin] Dillingham or the Hawaiian Dredging Company, because all of Waikīkī would become flooded about this time of the year because the rice fields up ma uka and banana fields. During heavy rain, that water would come down and find its way into Waikīkī, all along Ka'iulani Avenue. Dillingham was able to get the federal government to give him a contract or get the Territory to give him a contract to dredge the canal so Waikiki would not become flooded.

MM: Do you remember the floods?

ES: I remember one or two of them. You could walk up past what is now the Ka'iulani Hotel and the water would be easily a foot and a half deep.

(Telephone rings. Interview is interrupted and resumes.)

And dredging that canal was really a godsend for property. It saved a lot of property---dredging the canal took away the flood waters and transported them into, somewhere into the ocean down by the Kālia area. Since there were canals and swamps that lead to the ocean where the Ala Wai Canal now ends, all the water went down that way. I guess, another source that caused a lot of flooding in Waikīkī, is where the duck ponds, where the Rapid Transit used [to be] on McCully Avenue; there were duck ponds all along there. I think one of your famous citizens came from that area, Chinn Ho. I think that they lived there.

MM: You were talking about Ka'iulani [Avenue], I understand there was a school [there]?

ES: Ka'iulani School? Is that what you said?

MM: Waikīkī School?

ES: I don't know about the Ka'iulani School. There was a Ka'iulani School but I can't tell you about it.

MM: I was referring to Ka'iulani Avenue.

ES: Ka'iulani Avenue was named after that princess, Princess Ka'iulani.

MM: The school was in that area?

ES: No, Ka'iulani School, the only school there, was a Waikīkī School which I talked to you about, oh a week or two-three weeks ago. That was the only school there at that time.

MM: Did you attend that?

ES: No, there were various people I told you about. This friend of mine, I guess you talked to him, Ayau Lum, Chinn Ho, some of the Kahanamoku boys, Sam in particular. There were others, but I don't remember, that attended that school.

MM: What ever became of that school?

ES: Well, it was a frame building, very small. I don't remember really. A heavy gust of wind could almost blow it away.

MM: Was there a lot of children attending that school?

ES: Yes, there were a number of children because, as I say, that school took care of all the children in the Kapahulu area and even down to, you know where the Kaiser Dome [of the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel] is? Down there by Kālia? Because that's where the Kahanamokus came from. They all walked to school. And that was a focal point.

MM: So you did not go to Waikīkī School?

ES: No, I did not.

MM: You were sent off to . . .

ES: I went to Punahou [School] then I went to a school in Los Gatos, California. Then, I

MM: Los Gatos?

ES: Yeah, that's where I went to school.

MM: What year was this?

ES: That I went to school? I graduated from high school about 1928, then I went to University of Washington.

MM: You spent some time up on the Mainland then?

ES: Only going to school.

MM: Just to school? This is high school or intermediate school?

ES: Ah, let's see, two years going to high school and then I went to University of Washington.

MM: How do you spell Los Gatos?

ES: L-O-S G-A-T-O-S.

MM: Okay, that's close around San Jose area.

ES: Yeah, very close to San Jose, within spitting distance of San Jose. (Chuckles)

MM: When you were little, do you remember things like parades through Waikīkī?

ES: Parades through Waikīkī? No, I don't remember any parades through Waikīkī. When there was a parade, my folks took me into town. And, I cannot pinpoint the area, the exact area, where these parades took place. But generally speaking, they were in that area close to 'Iolani Palace on the 'Ewa side.

MM: I remember talking to someone who mentioned that the Elks Club used to hold their parades and they brought some camels down.

ES: I don't remember that, along Kalākaua Avenue?

MM: I think it was Kalākaua and they had some camels . . .

ES: They may have---wait, I'll tell you, this friend of mine that I mentioned to you, Joe Akana, lived very close to Kapi'olani Park. They kept the camels in that area. He would know. You never had

the opportunity to talk to Joe? He would know about that.

MM: I was just wondering because you lived close to the zoo.

ES: Well, he lived close to the zoo, this Joe Akana did, Joseph Y. Akana. You know he conducts that orchestra at the Elks Club every Wednesday.

MK: Mr. Steiner, what celebrations were celebrated in the Waikīkī area? What celebrations or holidays . . .

ES: Well, I'll tell you, they had canoe races there which were a big event but I don't remember them. These various canoe clubs did compete but I was pretty young then. Even Prince Kūhiō that I mentioned to you, Kalaniana'ole, he had a canoe, a racing canoe and I think these Hawaiian people came from the island of Hawai'i to participate in the canoe races which was a big event in Waikīkī. There, of course, there was the Outrigger Canoe Club, they had a group that participated and the other group, that I remember reasonably well, was the Hui Nalu Club, H-U-I N-A-L-U, which was really part of the the Moana Hotel, that hotel chain. They had a racing crew which was rather famous. Those were the big events at Waikīkī, canoe racing.

MK: You know, when you say that it was a big event, how many people would participate in it? What would happen?

ES: The canoe racing capital of the Hawaiian Islands at that time, was at Waikīkī, an area between the Hui Nalu Club and the Outrigger Club. Although I remember this vividly, many canoe races took place in Honolulu Harbor during the regatta time when you had a Myrtle Boat Club, Healani Boat Club, the Hilo Boat Club, they would all participate and many of the canoe races took place right in Honolulu Harbor.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

ES: You see my oldest brother, Harry, took part in these canoe races. He was a member of the crew usually consisting of about six people. My nephew [Keith Steiner] has pictures. He has an album, or maybe three of them, which would reflect members of the crews that took part in those canoe races at Waikīkī and Honolulu Harbor. I emphasize Honolulu Harbor.

MM: Did he [Harry Steiner] paddle for a certain canoe club?

ES: I think he paddled for the Outrigger Canoe Club and he paddled for the Hui Nalu Club.

MK: Who are some of the well-known canoe paddlers of those days?

ES: Alright. There was, at that time---let me see, there was a man named Zen, Z-E-N, they called him. The last name was G-E-N-E-V-O-E-S, Genevoes, Zen Genevoes. I'll tell you on the canoe racing, a man

that could give you quite a bit of information on that is this man I mentioned here, Albert E. Minville and Ederick Cook. I mentioned those names to you. Another well-known canoe paddler was a "Dad" Center. Later on he worked for [Theo. H.] Davies. They called him "Dad" Center but his real name was George Center. Also---there was a Kenneth Brown, no relation to George Brown or Francis Brown, that also participated as a canoe paddler. I think Duke Kahanamoku was also a canoe paddler. The Duke was one.

MM: Your friend, "Dudi" Miller?

ES: "Dudi" Miller---I have his picture there with all those uhu, but he was what you would call a canoe steersman. But I don't think that he participated in the canoe races. I don't think so. He had a great deal to do with stimulating canoe races because he was the owner of several canoes which was situated on the Moana Hotel properties. He stimulated that because there was so much canoe surfing then, canoe paddling etc. But I don't ever remember "Dudi" Miller as being part of the crew.

MM: I talked to Mrs. Atherton Gilman and I brought up the name "Dudi" Miller and she says she calls him "Dudi" Lemon.

ES: Yeah, wait, there was a piece of property there, the Lemons lived on that property. There was a Holt family and the Miller family. They all lived on that one big piece of property. There's a Paokalani Avenue and Kalākaua Avenue. He was known by the boys in Waikīkī as "Dudi" Lemon. But his legal name was Edward K. Miller. I think that he did a great deal for Waikīkī. He did a great deal for swimming. He did a great deal for surfing. He took his orchestra all over United States.

MM: He had an orchestra?

ES: He had an orchestra and it was the leading orchestra here in those days since "Dudi Miller" was a very fine piano player. He could read and write music. I believe he was a Kam [Kamehameha] School graduate. But I say, a person that's able to read music and write music does have high intelligence. It was his orchestra that played for, I might say, the best parties in Honolulu. His orchestra and group was always in demand. They had good Hawaiian singers, good Hawaiian musicians.

MM: What were some of the name singers?

ES: There was a Dan Makaena. His daughter married one of the Kaupiko boys. She's still alive. Her name was Mary. They call her "Girlie," "Girlie" Makaena Kaupiko, K-A-U-P-I-K-O. It was her father that was on the orchestra, on that band, Dan Makaena. "Dudi" Miller. There was a man by the name of Alec May. I don't remember the other Hawaiian singers but they were famous here. They played for all the big parties in Honolulu. The leader was "Dudi" Miller because he was one of the best piano players here at that time.

MM: He knew quite a lot of beach boys then?

ES: They called him, "Skipper." His nickname was "Skipper" because he was the head of the beach boys. He owned the canoes, he owned surfboards up in that area. Likewise, they rented those surfboards out and they did take out canoe surfing parties. As I told you, the canoe men, those canoes was six- and eight-men canoes, Hawaiian canoes, heavy koa canoes. The captain received one dollar and the second captain received [one dollar]. The other monies, I guess, went to the house as you would call it, the owners of the canoe.

MM: How much did it cost to rent [a canoe]?

ES: A dollar per person.

MM: A dollar per person and you would take out. . . .

ES: Usually six, but not more than eight.

MM: Did you surf?

ES: Yes, and as I said, during my vacation I did take out people in the canoes but that was, I'm talking about, that was years later. You see, my friend "Dudi" Miller, I knew him well, he died in 1935.

MM: Oh, he was young.

ES: Yes, he was born in 1886 and he died 1935. He had a disease which could be readily curable today. I think it was called yellow jaundice.

MM: Yellow jaundice. Was he the one who taught you how to surf?

ES: He had a great deal to do with it. There was another man named Wilhelm, [spelled] like Kaiser Wilhelm. He took a liking to me or I took a liking to him when I was very young. He took me out surfing and he, likewise, he showed me a great deal about how to handle a canoe. That family has members still around here. I think his daughter is still here. Last I heard she worked for Sears Roebuck, but anyway he has a daughter still here. That Wilhelm family. He was one of the beach boys but also he was, this Wilhelm, worked for the City & County in the Treasurer's office.

MK: You know, Mr. Steiner, nowadays we talk about beach boys but I was wondering what's your description or definition of a beach boy of those times?

ES: The definition of a beach boy at that time was a person, a big man, usually Hawaiian, that earned about probably seventy-five percent of his living from taking people out in canoes, teaching people how to surf and giving them swimming lessons. You know, life was easier, easy, easy going then. You didn't have to worry about automobiles or food, there was plenty of food around. You had a happy go-lucky group. All of them, I might say, about ninety percent of them were good musicians.

All the beach boys, I'd say ninety percent of the beach boys were good musicians. They all could sing and play 'ukulele. All of them were big men.

MK: Who were the beach boys that you knew the best?

ES: Well the families are here still today. They live up, family, there's the Keaweamahi family. I remember them very well. They were beach boys. One was a lifeguard, they called him, "Steamboat Bill." He had a brother, they called him, "Tough Bill." Both were big men. There was a David Kahanamoku. There was a man, by the name of, his real name was Lukela Kaupiko, they called him, "John D. [Kaupiko]." At that time, these men were the principal beach boys. Of course, later on, the other Kahanamokus as they grew up, they found their way down to Waikiki proper. When I say Waikiki proper, that area close to the Moana Pier. They all indulged in swimming, surfriding and taking people out in canoes.

MM: You ever go torch light surfing?

ES: No, no, that I never did that. The only time I'd take a canoe out at night [was] when I was out fishing.

MM: Was there a lot of fish back there?

ES: There was a lot of fish. All the mullet from Pearl Harbor would come down to pass through Waikiki at this time of the year, December, January and February.

MM: How did you catch them?

ES: Generally, with a net, net fishing.

MM: Did you sell any of them?

ES: You weren't supposed to, but I did.

MM: You could've made a living out of that then, huh?

ES: Well, I don't know if I could, but there were other people, other friends of mine that did.

MM: Did you have any kind of jobs or odd jobs that you liked to do?

ES: Well, when I came back from school I used to work for a company down here, Hawai'i Feed Company. That was a part-time job. I worked for them. I remember that. That was located right down here on Queen Street and Ka'ahumanu Street. That I did.

MM: What did you do there?

ES: Like a messenger boy, whatnot. As soon as I got out of high school I went up to the University of Washington. I spent three years

there with just one idea in mind--I want to get out of school, so I went to school. I spent two summers there going to school all with the idea of just getting out. I wanted to graduate as quickly as possible.

MM: Did you have a major, a major field [of study] . . .

ES: I majored in history. Would you call it liberal arts? Is that that sort of thing today, huh?

MM: Part of it.

ES: Pardon me, part of it, all right.

MK: As a college student, what were some of your hopes in terms of a career? What were your career goals at that time?

ES: Oh, I don't know. I didn't have any career in mind at that time. But after I got out of school, you had a depression here. You had a depression in the United States. A friend of the family's gave me a job on Merchant Street right up here. The address today would be 83 Merchant Street.

MM: What made you go to [University of] Washington?

ES: Why did I go there? Well, a number of boys from Hawai'i went there. That's one reason.

MM: They were friends?

ES: They were friends that I went to school [with] here and that I went to high school with etc. I can't give you the other reasons. But I think that was the main reason that I went there because I had friends there and I felt that I would be a little bit more at home there. And so I went to the University of Washington and that wasn't too far away from home at the time.

MM: Where was your home at that time?

ES: Right here. Yeah. I didn't come home by aeroplane or anything like that, by plane. I usually came home by the steamship, the Canadian Pacific. I remember that very vividly.

MM: How long did it take you to get from here to there by steamship?

ES: By the Canadian Pacific, four-and-a-half days. You got home here on the morning of the fifth day.

MM: What kind of social life did you have while you were in college? Did you go to many dances?

ES: No, I did not---I remember going to basketball, going to football, and track meets, baseball games. That was, I know you can't exactly

call that social life but I remember that. (Chuckles) There wasn't too much social life. You see, in Seattle they did have their dances there at the Olympic Hotel once or twice a week. But I don't remember going there.

MM: Did you have any jobs while you were living up on the Mainland?

ES: No, I did not.

MM: By the time you came back to Waikīkī, this would be around the mid-thirties already . . .

ES: You see, when I got back after school that was about December 23rd, around December 23, 1931 that's when I got back. Yeah, about that date.

MM: Was the tourist crowd . . .

ES: No, that was the depression and everything was very quiet in Waikīkī. Very quiet. Very, very few people. You got very, very few tourist here. The only tourists that came here during the depression were the ones that were exceedingly wealthy.

MM: And they stayed at . . .

ES: They stayed around the Moana Hotel. Ah, there was some rich families that came down here. I remember one of them. They were from Vancouver, British Columbia. There was the [Dean] Spencer family. I remember them--very wealthy. They stayed at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. That one I remember.

MM: What did the Spencer family do on vacation?

ES: Down here? They spent their days in the sunshine at Waikīkī. Some of them participated in drinking quite a bit of our 'ōkolehao which was good whiskey, our local whiskey at that time. We had Prohibition then.

MM: You folks made your own . . .

ES: No, well, the people working at the Moana Hotel, they all knew where--they all had bootlegger friends. They're all in the business of selling 'ōkolehao then. Nothing violent about it. You might say, that was more or less common.

MK: In those days, what kinds of people worked at Moana Hotel or Royal Hawaiian [Hotel]?

ES: Most of the people working at the Moana Hotel were Japanese. They had their quarters across the street from the Moana Hotel. There was a big frame building in which the employees lived or I might say, eighty-five percent of them lived in that big frame building located where the Princess Ka'iulani Hotel is now situated. That's

where the help lived.

MM: But those were built much later than the Moana [Hotel]. . . .

ES: The Moana Hotel which you see today was very much in existence then. The frame, the wooden building is still there isn't it? Then they added on the two wings, the structures made of cement. Then the last one was the Surfrider Hotel. Then came the Princess Ka'iulani Hotel. But that wooden structure is the same as it was many, many years ago, since the beginning of time and was connected to that pier [Moana Pier] that you see right [in the picture], it's almost the same. I haven't walked down the beach lately to see any changes although I threaten to do that.

MM: So, you don't feel that there was that many changes since the thirties then?

ES: There were changes at the Outrigger Club, the Outrigger Club you might say. Most of the changes at Waikiki came at the Outrigger Club. They produced or made a modern building. I say modern at that time, they had lockers. They had a good clubhouse. They had volleyball courts. They had a pavillion. Under the pavillion, they kept their canoes and surfboards. But all of that was prior to World War II.

MM: Were they greatly affected by the depression?

ES: The Outrigger Club? I cannot tell you that. I don't think it was any financial problem with people at the Outrigger Club. Everything was done in moderation. You had all the facilities there so I don't think the club was affected at that time by the depression. I don't think so. If the club was affected, it was minimal.

MM: After the depression, then . . .

ES: Then things started to change after World War II.

MK: How about life for yourself, you mentioned that you came back during the depression and through a family friend you got a job on Merchant Street . . .

ES: Yes, yes, after I got back from school.

MK: What was that job?

ES: This friend of mine ran the company here which was the Standard Finance and Mortgage Company. He was an accountant and they took care of mortgages and loans. Since I wasn't doing anything, he suggested to my father that I come over and work with him. So I was only too happy to do that because there was nothing to do. You couldn't get a job. But I was very appreciative of that man, his name was Muirhead, M-U-I-R-H-E-A-D. All members of the family at that time they're all good accountants and bookkeepers so I learned

a great deal from them.

MK: How long did you work there?

ES: I worked there about I guess eight years then World War II came along.

MM: You remember what you were doing that day, December 7?

ES: December 7 fell on a Sunday. Ah, I was out fishing. You see that pier there, the second pier [in the picture], I was fishing right opposite Kūhiō Park on the morning of December 7, 1941. You familiar with that Waikīkī, there's a Queen Surf [Queen's Surf], right inside of that, Queen Surf [Queen's Surf] I was fishing. I had put out fishnets the night before and early that morning [I went over there] to take out my nets, so I remember that day vividly. You had a strong tradewind blowing like you have blowing now. Yes, I remember that.

MM: Could you see Pearl Harbor from where you were?

ES: Well, see after I'd been through fishing which was still early, I took some fish up to friends living at Wilhelmina Rise and after completing my taking fish, or providing these people with some mullet, I ventured home, coming home by way of, I think it's Monsarrat or Campbell Avenue. I also remember the car that I had was a small Plymouth car with radio. I heard this broadcast. The broadcaster or the commentator was a Wbley Edwards. Later on he became famous in "Hawaii Calls," and he says Pearl Harbor's being bombed, etc., etc., and if you look in that direction you'll see smoke. Then he used some other words, "this is not a practice," the words that he used his exact words are these--and they seemed to be tattooed firmly on my brain--"This is the real McCoy." He used the words, "This is the real McCoy." That's what he said on the morning of December 7, 1941.

MM: Since you lived right on the beach, how did the war affect Waikīkī?

ES: Waikīkī was very quiet after the war. You wasn't supposed to really, there was no fishing. Immediately thereafter, lot of barbed wire. Barbed wire fences. They rolled barbed wire up so people wouldn't go down to the beach. You weren't allowed all over the place at Waikīkī. They had guard stations there which was set up soon thereafter the seventh of December, 1941. So everything was quiet in Waikīkī. You did have patrols. Usually army or the National Guard would walk up and down Kalākaua [Avenue]. They had these guard stations all over the place. I remember some of them even beyond the Diamond Head lighthouse on the beach.

MM: You must have had a lot of activity down at Fort DeRussy then?

ES: I don't remember that. Yes, they must have had lot of activity at Fort DeRussy because at Fort DeRussy you had big coastline guns situated there, all pointing out at sea.

MM: Did they ever fire those?

ES: I know they were firing 'em before the war. I don't remember them using those guns after December 7. I don't say they didn't. But I think most of the firing of guns consisted of using machine guns. I think they practiced with machine guns at that time.

MM: They fired out at sea?

ES: I don't remember them using the big guns. I do have a faint recollection of target boats pulling targets behind and firing from shore at the targets that were maybe located a mile away from the beach. I remember that, a little bit.

MK: You know, with all the guard stations and with the military personnel stationed on the island . . . what do you remember about soldiers or navy men being in Waikiki during the war years?

ES: Well, you did have bars in Waikiki during the war and you did have quite a traffic of army and navy men frequenting those bars. They were allowed to open after, maybe two weeks after December 7. Maybe starting in January 1942. The bars were opened. I remember that a little bit.

MK: How about the hotels?

ES: All of them after that because of liquor and the abundance of military men that were brought down here, the hotels were I think, were taken over or run by the army or navy. I think they were.

MM: Would you say then that this is about the start of the big tourist boom in Waikiki?

ES: I don't know about that. These were all men in uniform and I don't know if you would call them tourists. But that's about what I can remember. Beach activities like canoe surfing and that sort of thing that all came to a temporary stop. Now this man that I talked to you about, Joseph Akana, he spent much more time down at the beach than I did. When the war started, he accepted a job either at Pearl Harbor or with the army. Most of the beach boys then did take jobs, government jobs either with the army or navy or the contractors doing various defense work here. That happened. So Waikiki, you'd say, came to a virtual standstill.

MK: During the war years with Waikiki coming to a standstill, how did the businesses that existed since before the war survive?

ES: Well, I know, the eating places did survive very well because you did have army and navy traffic and they had liquor. A tremendous amount of liquor was sold here during World War II. Many of these people who had restaurants and served liquor made themselves wealthy. There was a Caesar Lopez that had a bar around here. There were many, I'd say all the bars were highly successful because of the

dispensing of liquor.

MK: What were some of the famous "watering holes" in Waikīkī during the war years?

ES: Wait, there was on Kalākaua Avenue there was a place across the Lau Yee Chai's, there was a place called the Palm Tree Inn. That was one. Waikīkī Tavern was another. Moana Hotel was another. Then, down as you got toward town here, along the waterfront, all of them did a lucrative business in the liquor business. On Kalākaua Avenue, where Kalākaua seemed to be at the crossroads, there was a Coco, in that I don't know if it was called Coco's, [but] it's now a Spencer Weaver restaurant. A man named Sunny Sundstrom ran a bar and restaurant place at the crossroads. You know where Coco's [is]? All right, places like that all did tremendous business. Anybody that had a liquor license in Honolulu did a fabulous business. In fact, the problem was getting the liquor. That was the problem, not selling it for these people because they'd run out of liquor all the time. That's what happened.

MK: With all the military personnel coming into Waikīkī, drinking, eating, staying at the hotels, how was your home life affected in the Waikīkī area?

ES: My folks were on the Mainland. My father had died in 1939. My mother was living on the Mainland. She went to the Mainland to live because she had two sons there. She lived with them. I, with my brother Harry, that had a home at Black Point. I lived in that big frame building, 2411 Kalākaua Avenue. That's where I lived.

MM: Were you married at the time?

ES: No, I wasn't married. I lived there and I worked down at Pearl Harbor for Pacific Contractors, CP, it was called CP & AB, Pacific Contractors. Then, I was drafted in the army on June 21, 1943. So once I was drafted, I was sent to a place at Waimānalo. That's where I lived [during the war]. That's all, with the army personnel attached to a crash, they called it a crash boat outfit. So that was all. I didn't like that sort of life but there was no choice though I had friends in Waimānalo.

MM: You never went overseas to . . .

ES: No, I didn't.

MK: What was the crash boat outfit?

ES: The crash boat outfit, the army, navy, especially army, have their air force. The air force then was centered at Hickam Field. Any trouble at sea, these boats from various sections of the island, Pearl Harbor, not Pearl Harbor necessarily, but Hale'iwa was one section. Waimānalo was another, Bellows Field. The Ala Wai Canal that was number three and I think there was two others. If in case

of any trouble at sea with any of the airplanes falling down etc. from these vantage points you're to go to sea and try to rescue army personnel. That's what a crash boat did. They had their small boats, fast boats, located in certain protected waters. I knew Waimānalo pretty well so I was sent over there. I think there were six crash boat outfits. There was one located in the Kāne'ohe Bay area. The immediate area was Waikāne. You know where that is? There was one there at the pier end [at Waikāne]. They had barracks there. Waikāne was one. The other one was located at Koko Head, where Portlock is. You know where there is a Portlock Pier? That was another. So there were about six of them on the island.

MK: While you were in the army there in Waimānalo, how often would you get to come home to your Waikīkī home?

ES: Oh, I didn't. I was able to buy a small place up in Mānoa where I wanted to be up by myself, 2367 East Mānoa Road. I had to get a place, somewhere I could spend my off-days. So that's what I did. I think this was a small lot with a small house located on about thirty-five hundred square feet of land.

MM: You still have it?

ES: No, no. It was very small but it was good enough for me.

MK: So during your army years, what became of your old family home?

ES: That became a recreation place for the army. Usually for the, not the enlisted men, but for the officers. That was a club, you might call it a club, for the officers of the army and navy. But most of the personnel were officers from the army. There were about six rooms in the house, maybe seven, and there was a downstairs. There was showers and everything else which the army took over. They maintained it all during the war.

MK: How was that arranged between your family and the army?

ES: The army came over to us, came over to my brother [Harry]--my father had died, my mother was on the Mainland--my brother was a trustee for the estate. They just said they wanted the place and [it] was vacant so there was no opposition. In fact, I think the family was glad that someone took it over. The place, you wouldn't call it an eyesore, but it required maintenance and insurance and yardwork. There was nobody there to do it. World War II broke out--the army thought it was a strategic place for their personnel or for their upper echelon--so they took it over.

MM: Your brother was living . . .

ES: He was married, living out at Black Point.

MM: Black Point.

MK: What sort of compensation did . . .

ES: No, there was no compensation, we didn't want any compensation but we just wanted somebody to take care of it. I think the only compensation we got, you might say, they took care of the taxes and maintenance of the place. I think that's all we wanted because the place wasn't interfering with our living or anything else, because there was no one here to keep it up.

MK: So after the war, what happened to the house?

ES: Well, after the war, the army decided to give it up and the family took it back. When they gave the place back, the place was in good repair. They took care of it.

MM: Did any of your family go back to live there?

ES: Yes, my mother came back and one of my brothers but Waikīkī had changed so--there was a bowling alley next door and the Waikīkī Tavern, they didn't want any noise. They decided they wanted to go somewhere else. So that was that.

MM: Your family rented [it out]?

ES: So they didn't do anything with the place at all after that. The place just remained vacant until the [City & County] condemned it in about 1955. You might say, the home remained vacant. Oh yes, the people did come over, we had friends that'd go downstairs and use the bathhouse, going swimming and surfing. But for all intents and purposes, the house remained vacant.

MM: Waikīkī, after the war, was still sort of in a mess.

ES: Yeah, you see, there was a lull period after the war. The tourist business had not taken root. The tourist business didn't start to take root here until, ah, after the Surfrider Hotel was built [in 1952]. Then there was a renaissance. The renaissance took place at about the time the Surfrider Hotel was built. The Matson Navigation Company and Castle & Cooke could look into the future or they did look into the future and they could see an upsurge in the tourist business and so they put up that modern hotel, the Surfrider. The other hotels in Waikīkī like the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] and the Halekulani Hotel did do a business but they didn't make a profit on a grand scale like they are doing today.

MM: Mr. Steiner, you did get married right?

ES: Yes, I think I got married in about 1948.

MM: Forty-eight? And you lived . . .

ES: Yeah, then lived down Waimānalo.

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE ONE; TAPE NO. 13-8-1-85

MM: Okay, you were living in Waimānalo . . .

ES: In 1939 there was an auction of property, of Territorial property on the beach. Since I had a fisherman friend living in the area--he didn't own [land]--a Japanese man by the name of Hirayama, talked to me, telling me about that auction of land and it was there that he had a shack and he wanted a place to live and he asked me if I would try to buy the property at auction on, about August 27, 1939. I said I would try. So I was successful at that day in buying a piece of property on the beach. I remember the auction and the price of the property at auction was \$4,225 for that piece of property and I was able to get it--ten percent down, etc. It was a hardship on me because I wasn't making more than \$175 to \$225 a month and I had to take care of that property, which I wanted anyway. That's where I am now living, [on the] property which I bought about August 27, or August 24, 1939.

MK: What was your occupation after you got discharged from the army?

ES: After I got discharged from the army, I was able to--like other people that were discharged--I was able to borrow \$20,000. I was able to borrow--all the people in the army had that privilege of borrowing I think \$20,000 at 4-1/2 percent interest, which I did. It was after that with some of that money, I went in with some friends right down here at Merchant Street in the stockbrokers business. I followed that business ever since.

MM: Okay, by the time you get out of the service then, . . .

ES: After I got out of the service directly after, I went and lived on the Mainland with friends for about nine or ten months. Then I came back.

MM: Where did you go?

ES: Oh, I had friends in San Jose, California which I went to school with and some of them had lived down here years ago. I was invited to go there and stay there for about eight or nine months, which I did. The army disturbed me a great deal, oh, (chuckles), I was not myself. I'm not accustomed to being a soldier living that life so I just wanted to get away and it was when I got back that I went in with some friends that knew the stockbrokers business and I took an office there, that was it. I stayed there at 83 Merchant Street for many years until all or most of my friends either gave up or went to heaven. Yeah, we sold out.

MM: When did you meet your future wife, then?

ES: Well, I went to Punahou School with her. The family attorney, her

father [Emil Cornelius Peters], was very friendly with our family. He was the family attorney. So I've known my wife ever since I went to Punahou School.

MM: What is her name?

ES: Her maiden name? First name is Elsa, E-L-S-A and the last name is Peters, P-E-T-E-R-S. Her father was Attorney General here and then he was the Chief Justice here. You can see his picture up in the Supreme Court.

MM: Certainly after you get married, Waikīkī started to be built up so to speak.

ES: Yeah, you might say, yes. Waikīkī started to emerge as a first-class hotel area where property was much in demand and property values started to go up.

MK: What would you attribute that change to, in your own opinion?

ES: You mean, why did Waikīkī change? I think that the big businesses here decided that there was another future instead of concentrating on pineapple and sugar. I think the big interest here like Castle & Cook, American Factors, Alexander & Baldwin, C. Brewer, [Theo.] H. Davies came to the conclusion that there should be a third industry and it should be the development of tourism, I think that was it.

MM: As Waikīkī is going through all these changes, then, your family property comes back into the forefront again . . .

ES: Yes . . .

MM: . . . things like the Kalākaua Realignment Project . . .

ES: Yes, you see, our family was able to take it. We had property across the street which my father bought at auction. It was that property which I mentioned that Prince Kūhiō, Prince Kalaniana'ole, put on the market. We had that property and the apartment people, the hotel people did take a mild interest in it, so that property did start to develop. The people really that were able to take advantage of the hotel business were certain other people like--you'd notice near Fort DeRussy--this hotelman Roy Kelly, he was really, I might say, the principal light in seeing a big hotel business for the islands. He saw it more than anybody else around here. Matson Navigation Company and Castle & Cooke did have a feel for it and they could see it coming so then they put up the Surfrider Hotel which I think cost them, at that time, \$1,500,000. It was put up by the Hawaiian Dredging Company or the Dillingham Construction Company.

(Telephone rings. Interview stops and resumes.)

I was saying the Surfrider hotel people, the Matson Navigation

Company and Castle & Cooke did see a future in the hotel business, not as bright as that envisioned by Roy Kelley, who spearheaded this whole thing, so you might say today, he is the biggest hotelman in the Hawaiian Islands. You know him, you heard of him?

MM: Uh huh [yes], now, your family owned quite a bit of property . . .

ES: We owned property across the street from where, let's see, where the Hyatt Regency Hotel is. That's what we have today. That was what was left.

MM: Did you folks think of getting into the hotel business yourself?

ES: My brother [Harry] did, but I was opposed to it---because we didn't have any knowledge of it or experience. I wanted to go into that business with the help of other people, hence we leased the property out. We had no experience in it. In a deal like that you have to be smart and you have to have the money and the experience. We didn't have the money to improve the property and we didn't have the experience but we could see a future in it. The pinnacle of success was reached by this man, [Chris] Hemmeter. You've heard of him? He was the one that envisioned the Hyatt Regency Hotel. It was through his efforts that the area really blossomed out and we have him to thank for his money, for his brains, ingenuity, skill, etc. He had it all. One man did it. That's as far as we know, as far as I know. All what we've done is to preserve that land and see to it that it was improved correctly or improved well. In fact, I intend to go over to the Library of Hawai'i and look up in Men of Hawai'i, get some history of my father who was able to gather all this property together with a lot of hard work etc. It was he that did it, not necessarily the other members of his family. It took a lot of hard work to do all this for one man. Maybe I'm not looking at this thing in the proper perspective, maybe his wife had a great deal to do with it because she was not a person to go out and spend money lavishly. Nothing like that.

MM: In 1955, the City took over your property.

ES: By eminent domain, yes, about 1955 maybe 1954, right around that date.

MM: How did you folks feel about . . .

ES: I didn't like it at all. I felt it was highly unfair. I know the City or State has the right to condemn property, but the Elks Club was in a Master Plan the same as our property, the Surfrider was in a Master Plan, all subject to condemnation, call it eminent domain, but the City seemed to want to concentrate on our property. That made me very bitter about the whole thing. There's nothing I could do about it. I had friends on the City Council that told me that this thing was gonna come but we weren't smart enough to take heed at that time. Castle & Cooke and some of the other big property owners in Waikiki did not want any more hotels on the beach. They wanted to see it open space. They saw to it that the City Council

forced us into condemnation.

MM: That's interesting though. How did the other families that were [affected] . . .

ES: There were some other families there that had property. Now, I think as I mentioned to you before, there was the Kanakanui family and there was the Cleghorn family but their parcels of land were very small, very, very, in a way, minute and were not conducive to putting up big buildings whereas our property was conducive. So in many of the, I don't say many, but the others, they favored having their property condemned. Taxes were going up and the income from those pieces of property was not sufficient to take care of taxes and upkeep, insurance and things like that, so they favored obtaining the money through eminent domain or any other way. They didn't wanna go through putting in improvements themselves.

MM: You're talking like the Cleghorns and the . . .

ES: Yeah, that's right, there was the Kanakanui family. Now there was another family there too. There was another small piece of property right where that banyan tree is on Kalākaua Avenue, there was an Emmons family. They had a small piece of property there. I think the City took them over too.

MM: All this time you're living in Waimānalo, you read about these things affecting your family lands . . .

ES: Correct, correct, yeah.

MM: Did you often go to Waikīkī to visit?

ES: No, I just lost interest in Waikīkī.

MM: You lost interest in it?

ES: I lost interest. My hobby was fishing and, likewise, the hobby of my friends, many of them, was and is fishing. So, I felt that Waikīkī was not the same. I couldn't fish there or anything else. I just figured Waikīkī was not the place for me now. And with all, with so many people there and everything around there and the place was overfished, there was no fishing then, so my life was all centered at Waimānalo.

MM: So looking back after all these years, how do you look at Waikīkī now?

ES: Well, I think it's done a great deal for the State, bringing in all these people, generating a lot of money, a lot of business. I think that Waikīkī has helped the Hawaiian Islands. Waikīkī has reached a state where it is so overbuilt, there is an overflow and the overflow flowed out to the outside islands, maybe Maui and the island of Hawai'i. You got so many people down here from all over the United States.

Just like today, if you went over to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and observed the flow of business, you can see it's nothing but money around and the tourist that frequent that area today on the beach are really prosperous people. I guess, they, too, could see a future in the Hawaiian Islands especially where you have good climate. I think that has played a great part in this thing--in this tourist movement.

MM: They may turn Waimānalo into another Waikīkī. (Chuckles)

ES: That'd be kinda hard. No, that'd be rather difficult because the area between the highway and the ocean, I don't think you have enough room. And the other one is maybe over at Kailua you can do it, but at Waimānalo it would be rather difficult. The climate is not as good as in Waikīkī. Waikīkī is like the Kona Coast. You have mild tradewinds ninety percent of the time. I don't think there is an area that can beat Waikīkī for tourism because of that mild climate and you have the surf there which is very conducive to good surfing for both canoes and surfboards and I doubt very much if there is another area in the Hawaiian Islands where surfing is so good. I don't think so.

MM: I think now we'll end the interview . . .

ES: All right.

END OF INTERVIEW

WAIKĪKĪ, 1900 - 1985: ORAL HISTORIES

Volume I

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i-Mānoa**

June 1985